

success to the Communist Party, U.S.A. The party was most enthusiastic over Rivera's appearance.

Communism and the press

One of the paradoxes at the convention was the fact the convention was closed to the press, this in spite of the party's old, old theme that the Communist Party fights for freedom. When queried by a reporter as to why the convention was not open to the press, Hall blithely stated that the party has received unfavorable treatment from the press in the past and also because there were delegates in attendance who might lose their jobs if their identities became known. Of course, the real reason the press was not admitted was because the party does not dare let its illegal aims against the United States become public. The exclusion of the press is a tacit admission that the Communist Party, U.S.A., is a clandestine, far from legitimate organization, and that if the free press cannot praise communism, then there is no room at Communist conventions for the press. His feelings regarding the purpose of the press are revealing, too, as to what place the fourth estate would have in a society dominated by the Communist Party.

However, veteran newspapermen are not easily fooled, and some of Hall's answers to questions posed by the reporters quickly exposed him. For instance, Hall was asked if the Communist Party, U.S.A., advocates the violent overthrow of the U.S. Government. Hall, convicted in Federal court for conspiring to do just that—Hall, who once openly testified that he was willing to take up arms to bring about a Soviet America, blandly said without hesitation, "No, we have never advocated this."

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COMMITTEE PRINT

STATEMENT BY
J. EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

TO THE

SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY
ACT AND OTHER INTERNAL SECURITY LAWS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
EIGHTY-SIXTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

CONCERNING THE 17TH NATIONAL
CONVENTION, COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.,
DECEMBER 10-13, 1959



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II

STATEMENT BY J. EDGAR HOOVER, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, CONCERNING 17TH NATIONAL CONVENTION, COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A., NEW YORK CITY, DECEMBER 10-13, 1959

Profaning the very meaning and spirit of the "Star-Spangled Banner" by opening its sinister conclave with our national anthem, the Communist Party, U.S.A., convened its 17th national convention on December 10, 1959, in a hotel in New York City's Harlem section. Four days later, the same 200 delegates, representing other Communists throughout our Nation, adjourned in a state of jubilance.

And well they might feel in high spirits—because Communist Party, U.S.A. emerged from this convention more powerful, more unified, and even more of a menace to our Republic.

Without question, the most signal achievement was the welding of the Communist Party, U.S.A., into a solidly unified, aggressive force behind the militant, devious, and ruthless leadership of Gus Hall, ex-convict and avowed archenemy of the American way of life.

Hall was elected general secretary of the party at the convention, and there is virtual unanimous agreement among party powers and rank and file that he is the No. 1 man in the party. As such, he now spearheads as powerful a group of dissidents and fanatic democracy haters as America has seldom seen within its shores during peacetime.

The Communist conspiracy in America today is led by a man who has openly boasted that he was willing to take up arms and fight to overthrow our form of Government. Hall was convicted in Minneapolis, Minn., in 1934, in connection with a riot there when he was a member of the Young Communist League. During his trial he testified as follows:

Q. But you would prefer the Russian—you would prefer to be in Russia?
A. I prefer America with a Soviet Government.
Q. And you are willing to fight and overthrow this Government?
A. Absolutely.
Q. And you are willing to take up arms and overthrow the constituted authorities?
A. When the time comes, "Yes."

As a hot-blooded young Communist in the late 1930's, Hall was arrested in Ohio and charged with the possession and use of explosives. He subsequently pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of malicious destruction of property and was fined \$500.

The election of the fiery Hall to lead a strongly knit Communist Party which has and always will have as its chief objective the communizing of America should certainly shake even the most apathetic American from his lethargy, especially when viewed in the light of this hardened Communist's own statements. During radio and television interviews at the convention, Hall gladly stated that the American public "definitely" has underestimated the size and influence of the Communist Party, U.S.A. He added that the Communists in this

country should make even greater strides toward increasing its already growing number of members. He boasted that the party "is growing in industry and youth" due mainly to the change in political climate.

Assuredly, there is a significant lesson for every American in this display of machinations, propaganda, and opportunism which is communism itself at work within our borders. The 17th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., was a revealing 4-day miniature preuve of what our Nation would become if those who aspire to become commissars of a Soviet America should ever fulfill their evil ambitions. It is apparent that, more than ever before, each American must maintain vigilant watchfulness toward this Trojan horse in our midst.

The 17th national convention is being hailed by the Communists themselves as a great milestone in the party's history in the United States.

These gains, recognized as formidable ones, are regarded by the party faithful as their chief accomplishments:

1. Promotion of Gus Hall, strongly pro-Russian and an energetic, aggressive leader, to the No. 1 position in the party;
2. Uniting the membership solidly behind the newly elected leadership, making the party a hard-hitting, mobile weapon against the free American Government;
3. Exploiting the current international political climate in an effort to make Russian policies more acceptable to American public opinion. This involves an attempt to exploit Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's visit to the United States as a means of furthering its own schemes for bringing about a Soviet America;
4. Implemented a number of concrete programs aimed at increasing party membership and party influence in America. Such programs include increased emphasis on party recruiting, training of leaders, collection of funds, stepping up of party propaganda, and infiltration efforts into non-Communist organizations such as labor unions, Negro groups, national minorities, etc.

The newly elected "boss" of the Communist Party, U.S.A., Gus Hall, vaulted to the top post of the party through a combination of fortuitous circumstances and artful plotting. He has long been disgruntled at what he believed to be soft, ineffectual leadership in the party—but his ambitions have been hidden by the shadow of Eugene Dennis, national chairman and previously acknowledged leader of the party. As the date of the convention approached, Dennis still was top man in the party although there was indication that Hall had nurtured a "dump Dennis" campaign to the point where Dennis' position was indeed a tenuous one. Then came the news that Dennis would be unable to attend the convention—that he had suffered a slight stroke and that someone else would have to give the keynote address.

The scheming, opportunistic Hall rose to the occasion and delivered the address. He saw his ambition start to crystallize. Today he is communism's champion in the United States—a powerful, deceitful, dangerous foe of Americanism.

What sort of a man is Gus Hall? We in the FBI know him as a fanatical practitioner of Karl Marx' tenet that "the end justifies the means"; a coldly calculating Communist conniver who changes tac-

tics as easily as he changed his name many years ago. He was born Arvo Halberg in 1910 at Virginia, Minn., the son of Matt and Susanna Halberg, both of whom later became charter members of the Communist Party. As a result of his early background of having been born into communism, many of his followers regard him as literally a man of destiny who can breathe new life into the party.

Hall joined the party in 1927 and went to Russia in 1931 to attend the Lenin School where students were taught, among other things, sabotage and guerrilla warfare techniques. After returning to this country in 1933, he became active in the Young Communist League as an organizer and in 1938 entered into full-time party work as a section-organizer. As a Russian-taught disciple of Leninistic communism, Hall worked hard and rose swiftly into positions of increasing power. He was elected to the party's national committee in 1945 and became a national board member in 1947. In 1950, he was appointed national secretary, a move necessitated by the imprisonment of Eugene Dennis, who was then general secretary and who was found guilty of conspiring to violate the Smith Act of 1940.

Then, faced with confinement himself after being convicted for violation of the same act, Hall jumped \$20,000 bond and became a fugitive. He dyed his blond hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes dark brown, shaved off his mustache, and shed 40 pounds in an unsuccessful effort to evade apprehension. Arrested by the FBI in 1951, Hall was sentenced to 3 years for contempt of court, making a total of 8 years when added to the 5-year sentence imposed for conspiracy to violate the Smith Act.

Conditionally released from prison in March 1957, Hall, after his probationary period ended on April 5, 1959, immediately resumed his nefarious aim of infecting America with communism.

This, then, is the man—ex-convict, propagandist, unabashed emissary of evil, and rabid advocate of a Soviet United States.

Behind this Moscow-trained, utterly ruthless Communist leader, the 17th national convention formulated an organizational apparatus designed to make the Communist Party a hard-striking power against American society. A 60-member national committee was established with such veteran and hardened party leaders as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, James Jackson, Hyman Lumer, Arnold Samuel Johnson, and Irving Potash. This national committee is theoretically the governing body of the party between conventions, but actual policy is made by the small ruling clique.

This small clique consists of the party's national officers (though a national executive committee is later to be established) who were elected after the convention by the national committee. The national officers are:

- William Z. Foster, chairman emeritus.
- Eugene Dennis, national chairman.
- Claude Lightfoot, vice chairman.
- Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, vice chairman.
- Benjamin J. Davis, national secretary.
- Gus Hall, general secretary.
- Hyman Lumer, national education secretary.
- James Jackson, national secretary for the South.

A five-man secretariat, consisting of Dennis, Hall, Davis, Lumer, and Jackson, will be the day-to-day operating authority of the party.

Although the positions of national chairman, national secretary, and general secretary theoretically are of equal importance, Hall is indisputably the new party chief. It will be remembered that Joseph Stalin once bore the title of general secretary of the Russian Communist Party—a position from which he became dictator of all communism.

Two important conclusions can be drawn from the national convention's leadership decisions:

(1) *The party will remain in the future—as it has been in the past—an obedient slave of Moscow.*—No new personalities were brought into the party's top leadership. Rather, leadership is today exercised by the same corps of hardened, disciplined, veteran Communists who feel that Moscow represents the final goal of all of mankind's hopes. So-called rightwing Communists are not represented. They have either voluntarily resigned in complete disillusionment or been coldbloodedly purged. These rightwingers believed that the party in America should have some choice in its tactics of operation, not be completely bound by Moscow. This slight deviation cost them dearly. Communists should know there is only one road—that defined exclusively by Moscow.

Proof of the growing monolithic unity of the party is further shown in the changes made in the party's constitution by the convention. These changes eliminated features stemming from the previous convention which allowed greater freedom to local party units. The 1959 changes eliminated these rights and centralized control in national headquarters. They are in full accord with the historic Communist principle of democratic centralism which asserts that once a decision has been made in the party it must be carried out without dissent.

(2) *The elimination of factionalism, making the party a more unified and more compact organization.*—Especially since the death of Stalin, the party has experienced factional disputes. These "factionalists" have now been liquidated or driven to cover. This was the theme of Gus Hall's summary remarks just before the end of the convention. Speaking with gusto, this new Communist commissar declared that "we" now have one policy, one line, and one direction. Interpreting the convention, Hall stated it gave a mandate to the leadership to completely destroy and burn out all elements of factionalism and that the leadership must carry out the mandate. Hence, in his words, the party cannot permit factionalism.

So, in the days ahead, we can expect an ever-increasing emphasis on party discipline, with all dissidents being eliminated. This is truly in the tradition of international communism which has no place for free speech and free thought.

Every action of the convention was designed to make the party a hard-hitting, versatile, and mobile weapon of attack against our form of government.

Why is the party so optimistic for the future? Why were Gus Hall and other Communists almost gleeful in speaking of Communist possibilities in the days ahead?

The answer comes from the convention proceedings—an answer which, like a thread, runs through all the remarks, actions, and hopes

of the leadership. It is: *that the recent visit of Premier Khrushchev to the United States has done much to create an atmosphere favorable to communism among Americans.* In one convention discussion, for example, it was stated that as the result of the Khrushchev visit the American people have open minds toward socialism. Hence, the party must learn how to get socialism across to the people and break down misconceptions about the Soviet Union.

To party leaders, Khrushchev's presence in this country has eased the way for party activities. The Communists see the possibility of gaining still more influence in American society. Gus Hall, in his keynote speech on the convention's first day, was most sensitive to this point. He stated:

* * * the central question of this convention is: What is the role of the party in this entirely new situation? How can it now move out into the broad stream of the people's movement? How can it break the bonds of its isolation and become more and more effectively a factor in the life of our Nation * * *

He then went on:

We want to participate in, organize, and lead the broadest of united front movements—on every level—in a thousand ways, in 10,000 places, on 100,000 issues—if possible, with 180 million people.

Note the scope of Communist hopes—180 million people or the entire United States. The buoyant optimism of the party is geared to plans to take advantage of an international climate which, in their eyes, is aiding their work. Americans can look forward to a period of renewed party agitation in all fields—always hoping to increase party strength and influence. The Communists will endeavor to gain allies wherever they can be found, creating fronts, launching infiltration programs, participating in all phases of American life.

This "new hope" program of communism in the United States is geared to concrete programs both (1) building up the party apparatus itself, and (2) increasing party influence in the Nation as a whole.

Party leaders realize that a strong party organization is absolutely necessary to a successful agitation program. The convention adopted a number of programs to strengthen the internal operational structure of the party.

A resolution was adopted calling for the immediate launching of an intensive membership drive to run to May 1, 1960, aimed at increasing membership by 10 percent. This resolution outlined a program which calls for each party district to advise the national office by the end of January 1960, as to its specific plans for recruitment. To show the urgency of this task, the resolution asserted that each national committee member must adopt a personal quota of new recruits. In addition, each Communist Party club must adopt a quota. Moreover, each national officer will be designated to a specific district to aid in this nationwide recruitment program.

The training of party members also must be stepped up. This will mean more party schools. In the Communist Party, education (really meaning indoctrination) is of vital importance. Every member must be deeply imbued with the principles of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

The convention also adopted reports about the status of the Worker, the party's weekly publication. It was pointed out that the Worker was the lifeblood of the party and that strengthening this paper must be one of the party's chief aims. The Worker does much to guide

members, giving them the latest twists of the party line. Circulation of the Worker is now approximately 14,000, and the party wants it to be increased to 25,000 in 1960. The convention also accepted a resolution to the effect that the Daily Worker, which was discontinued in 1958, be reinstated in the shortest possible time but preferably prior to the 1960 national elections in the United States. To the party, the Communist press represents one of its most effective methods of propaganda. In addition, it was recommended that the new national committee should set a date for the next fund drive, probably from January 13, 1960, to May 1, 1960. (The date of January 13 was selected as on this date in 1958 the Daily Worker was discontinued.)

Hence, the convention has given new guidance and enthusiasm to the party's recruiting, indoctrination, and propaganda campaigns. As one of the speakers stated, this was a convention to build the Communist Party, U.S.A.

Communist Party, U.S.A., follows Lenin

Virtually every move taken at the 17th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., has its roots in the teachings of the early gods of communism. In 1902, Lenin wrote:

We must "go among all classes of the people" as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators, and as organizers. * * * The principal thing, of course, is propaganda and agitation among all strata of the people * * *.

In 1920, Lenin was even more explicit regarding the manner in which the seed of communism was to be planted in fertile areas of unrest, dissension, and strife:

* * * Every sacrifice must be made, the greatest obstacles must be overcome, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently, and patiently, precisely in those institutions, societies, and associations—even the most reactionary—to which proletarian or semiproletarian masses belong * * *.

Naive, indeed, is the minority, class, or dissatisfied group which lets its banner pass into the hands of the Communists, for this banner will be held aloft by the Reds only so long as it serves the purpose of expediting the Communist objective of domination over all classes.

Youth

If for a moment any American considers the Communists to be blind to opportunity, let him consider this vile tactic which came out of the 17th national convention:

It is obvious to the Communists that, if its party is to survive, it must attract the youth of this Nation. As newspapers and other media reveal almost daily, many of America's juveniles are in a state of upheaval—adult authority and morality have been spurned to the point where juvenile arrests in this country in 1958 increased 8 percent over the preceding year.

During the convention, an Illinois Communist took note of the juvenile delinquency situation and proposed that if "we" provide them with a place to go and with activities, they will not be so delinquent; "we" can move them in a positive direction.

What can be more despicable or dangerous to our democracy than this sort of Red Pied Piper trickery?

Negroes

Another of the major aims of the 17th national convention was to reemphasize the recruitment of Negroes into the Communist Party by reembellishing the same old hackneyed phrases alleging that the Communist Party is the savior of the Negro. It is no secret that one of the bitterest disappointments of communistic efforts in this Nation has been their failure to lure our Negro citizens into the party. Despite every type of propaganda boomed at our Nation's Negro citizens, they have never succumbed to the party's saccharine promises of a Communist Utopia. This generation and generations to come for many years owe a tremendous debt to our Negro citizens who have consistently refused to surrender their freedoms for the tyranny of communism.

Behind the Communists' scheme of recruiting Negroes is deceit as there is in every one of their designs. The Reds are not so interested in the Negro as they are in using him to further Communist goals. This is clearly shown by instructions issued by the Communist Party, U.S.A., to its members as early as 1925:

The aim of our party in our work among the Negro masses is to create a powerful proletarian movement which will fight and lead the struggle of the Negro race against exploitation and oppression in every form and which will be a militant part of the revolutionary movement of the whole American working class, to strengthen the American revolutionary movement by bringing into it the * * * Negro workers and farmers in the United States to broaden the struggles of the American Negro workers and farmers, connect them with the struggles of the national minorities and colonial peoples of all the world and thereby further the cause of the world revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Negro resolution adopted by the convention discarded the party's historic position advocating "self-determination," meaning that Negroes should be given the right to form a separate nation in the Southern States. Stalin had defined "self-determination" in these words:

* * * the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states.

The 1959 convention resolution hence represents a party admission that its position concerning Negroes is bankrupt. Time itself has shown that the party is not interested in the welfare of the Negro, but only in using him as a tool to advance party interests.

Other minorities

During the 17th national convention, much was made of the party's responsibility of championing the causes of such groups in the United States as the Mexicans, Japanese-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and, a relatively new target, the American Indian. Again, such pseudo concern by the party is readily made apparent by its history of exploiting any area of unrest.

As early as 1921, the Communist International laid down the following rule to be followed by foreign Communist parties affiliated with the Comintern:

In countries whose population contains national minorities, it is the duty of the party to devote the necessary attention to propaganda and agitation among the proletarian strata of these minorities.

The choice of the words "propaganda" and "agitation" belies any "noble" motive which those who are easily beguiled might ascribe to the international Communist conspiracy.

Labor unions

The 17th national convention reaffirmed the party's constant aim of attempting to infiltrate and dominate labor unions to turn them into a tool for communism—to make them recruiting areas for additional members in the Communist movement.

The 17th national convention's 10-page draft resolution on trade union problems contains the pious statement that—

" * * * the fact that Communists have no interests apart from those of the entire working class must be brought home to the American workers again and again.

Actually, the party's burning desire to grab control of labor unions is nothing more than an attempt to carry out one of Lenin's most necessary rules to achieve communism:

It is necessary to be able to withstand all of this, to agree to any and every sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of devices, maneuvers, and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuge, in order to penetrate into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work in them at all costs.

Certainly, the Communists' glittering generalities of "freeing the workingman" and securing "better working conditions" for him can never take the place of the free bargaining system under our democracy. No semantic windowdressing will ever disguise the true objective of communism—to make slaves of workingmen.

The man masterminding the party's unscrupulous attempts at infiltrating labor unions is Irving Potash, national labor secretary. His sordid background indeed makes a farce of the party's claim that it has no interests apart from those of the entire working class. Born in Russia in 1902, he has an arrest record dating back to 1919 for criminal anarchy, conspiracy to influence and intimidate witnesses, conspiracy to teach and advocate the overthrow of the U.S. Government by force and violence, and illegal reentry into this country.

Potash has been dedicated to the Communist movement since his early youth and has been described by a party comrade as "a guy who has never betrayed the party line." In 1931, he placed his own picture on a passport issued to another person and utilized this passport to travel to Russia to attend the Lenin School. Although Potash has stated that he considers America his home, there is no indication he has made any efforts to obtain U.S. citizenship in the 46 years he has called America his homeland. He has, however, frequently and consistently invoked the constitutional privileges of an American citizen when questioned by various congressional committees regarding his Communist Party membership and activities.

Farmers

In considering what position the Communist Party, U.S.A., will take during the 1960 political campaign, those in attendance at the 17th national convention were provided with a document containing a 10-point program which the party would support. One of these concerning farmers is ridiculous per se when examined in the light of the ultimate aim of communism. Despite the slaves in the communes of Communist China and the state-owned collective farms and farm machinery in Soviet Russia, the Communists in America have the

effrontery to intone sanctimoniously that the Communist Party, U.S.A., will support a program which will "protect the rights of the small farmers to their land and their implements."

What else could such a program be but one small, but expedient, step toward the sovietization of American farmers? Who can conceive of farmers being allowed to own their farms and machinery in the type of society advocated by Communists whose very name connotes a social order in which all goods are held in common by a single authoritarian party?

Political elections

Communists know that apathy among American citizens is the think in democracy's armor. One of the speakers at the 17th national convention revealed the basic Communist tactic of taking advantage of every weakness when he urged members of the Communist Party, U.S.A., to move in the primaries since 90 percent of the Congressmen are elected at the primaries.

The convention heard a report of a five-man committee which had made a study of what the party could do in the 1960 elections. It advocated, among other things, influencing both major political parties. Also, it recommended that the party attempt to exploit labor and Negro groups to wield independent political influence. This report was adopted by the convention.

Education

The Communist Party remains deeply interested in the American college student. At a press conference, Gus Hall was asked if the party had made any inroads among college students. He replied that the party had made gains in this field, adding that there has been a change in the thinking of college students toward "nonconformity." Hall added that he based this comment on the fact that a number of requests have been received from colleges for speakers.

International relations

As evidence of the fact that the Communist Party, U.S.A., is a part of the international Communist conspiracy, the convention received greetings from 50 Communist Parties in foreign countries. Most prominent, of course, were the messages received from the Communist Parties in Russia and China.

A motion adopted by the convention reflects another area of growing Communist concern. This motion instructed the new national committee to create a subcommittee on Latin American affairs. Another motion called for an appeal to the conscience of the American people to give support to the "revolutionary" movement developing in Latin America.

In the days ahead, the party can be expected to give increasing emphasis to Latin American matters. Joseph North, foreign affairs editor of the Worker, gave a report to the convention on Castro and the Cuban situation. He praised the progress that has been made by the Cuban Government and said that the agrarian land reform has made the farmers more prosperous than they were before the revolution.

Juan Santos Rivera, president of the Communist Party of Puerto Rico, addressed the convention. He extended his best wishes for